

E-SERVICE TO MANAGE CONTACT INFORMATION WITH PRIVACY LEVELS

James G. Douvikas
Terry R. Sheehy
Chris W. T. McKay

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

10 A method of providing an electronic business card (EBC) access and
organization service on the Web. The cardholder database is accessible and searchable
from any browser connected to the Internet or the EBC service may be installed
behind a conventional firewall and thus accessible only to intranet users. The service
thus provides easy access to cardholder contact information with privacy assured by
use of integrated access restrictions. Access to and delivery of contact information by
15 the service is not limited to a Web browser interface as commonly known today. The
service provides multi-mode access and/or data delivery interfaces. The service also
provides an export feature that formats search results into a pre-defined file structure
readable by a conventional contact management programs. Custom export file formats
may also be defined provide even wider connectivity and cross-platform utility.
20 Access to individual records is controlled at both the record level and the field level,
with multiple privacy levels for each field, in addition to the well-known "public" and
"private" levels. Users having certain permissions are permitted to read a defined
group of records, though not necessarily all fields in each record. A location tracking
feature is also provided to allow the cardholder to rapidly designate a pre-defined
25 contact location. Alternately, the cardholder may define a temporary contact location
not normally stored in the database system. Electronic mail sent by the cardholder is
automatically formatted to contain a signature hypertext link directing recipients of
the email to the EBC service. This hyperlink enables the recipient of the email to
rapidly access the EBC system to locate the cardholder and/or obtain additional
30 information.